



Week 3 Assignment: Background – Developing Your Action Research Plan

Overview

The first two weeks provided a variety of readings, lectures, interviews and activities that helped students recognize the importance of action research in addressing many needed topics or areas of need in schools. You even had an opportunity to hear from three school leaders discussing their interests in action research. As we have explained in our lectures and our written comments, we did not design this course as a precursor to a dissertation. Instead, we wanted to provide each of you with the tools to conduct action research in whatever leadership position you may pursue.

This week will focus on developing a detailed action research plan. You will see from our examples, as well as from the readings and resources, there are a variety of strategies and steps to follow in conducting action research. Two of the major goals this week will be providing a framework, or a how to approach action research perspective, as well as sharing strategies that will empower you to conduct an action research project. Remember the action research plan is a part of your intern plan – it is an overview, a guide for conducting your action research. The action research project is the process and product – it is the implementation and assessment of your plan and it may take several months to complete. This course focuses on the development of an effective plan that will guide your action research project.

Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Know which areas for action research to address school improvement are priorities of the site supervisor.
- 2) Develop a clear and concise research question and/or statement to address the school improvement project(s).
- 3) Identify and analyze the common steps or format to design an action research plan (e.g., methods for data collection/analysis, research tools needed, etc.).
- 4) Understand the importance of disseminating the results of the action research project in the final intern report and to other scholar practitioners and interested stakeholders.

Performance Outcomes:

- 1) Write a research question and/or clear statement to address the possible areas for action research emerging from the interview and brainstorming.
- 2) Draft an action research plan that includes:
 - Goals and objectives of the research investigation
 - Resources and research tools needed for data gathering
 - Persons responsible for implementation of the action research plan
 - Process for monitoring the achievement of goals and objectives
 - Assessment instrument(s) to evaluate the effectiveness of the action research study
- 3) Review the steps in your research plan and make any needed revisions.

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- 4) Include in the action research plan, the methods used to disseminate findings of the research project.

Rubric

Use the following Rubric to guide your work on the Week 3 Assignment.

Tasks	Accomplished The evidence suggests that this work is a "Habit of Mind." The educator is ready to mentor others in this area.	Proficient The evidence suggests that performance on this work matches that of a strong educator.	Needs Improvement The evidence does not yet make the case for the educator being proficient at this task.
Action Research – Developing your question(s) or problem(s) statement	Student provides a clear description of the action research question(s) or problem(s) statement that reference rationale and previous research into this question(s) or problem(s). (3 Points)	Student briefly describes a research question or problem statement, but does not discuss the rationale or research leading to the development of the question or statement. (2 Points)	Student fails to identify a research question or statement and does not discuss any of the rationale or previous research in trying to develop a research question or problem statement. (1 Point)
Draft Action Research Plan and Blueprint	Student clearly identifies all areas of his or her action research plan and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals and objectives/outcomes of the research investigation • Activities designed to achieve the objectives • Resources and research tools needed for data gathering • Draft timeline for completion or implementation of activities • Persons responsible for implementation of the action research plan • Process for monitoring the achievement of goals and objectives 	Student identifies less than the seven areas addressed in the draft action research plan and does not provide complete descriptions for each area. (5 – 7 Points)	Student identifies fewer than five areas of the draft action research plan and does not provide complete descriptions for each of the areas. (1 – 4 Points)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment instrument(s) to evaluate the effectiveness of the action research study (8 – 10 Points)		
Reviewing, revising and posting the draft action research plan using the recommended template(s)	<p>Student reviews the draft action research plan and posts a completed draft Action Research Plan that addresses all elements identified in Tool 7.1 Action Planning Template or completes all elements of the SIP/PIP (School or Professional Improvement Plan of Action).</p> (3 Points)	<p>Student posts the draft action research plan using one of the templates (i.e., Tool 7.1 or the SIP or PIP Plan of Action), but does not complete all elements of the template.</p> (2 Points)	<p>Student posts a draft action research plan but the plan addresses less than half of the elements of the recommended template.</p> (1 Point)
Describing your dissemination plan	<p>Students provide a thorough description of a plan to disseminate and share their action research plan, and their dissemination plan addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background information on action research project Design of the action research project (must include procedures, data collection and data analysis) Describes what is being learned from the action research project Includes concluding thoughts and recommendations (4 Points)	<p>Students provide a dissemination plan but addresses only three elements of the plan.</p> (3 Points)	<p>Students provide a partial dissemination plan.</p> (1 Point)
Assignment Mechanics	<p>Responses are relevant to course content; no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Students demonstrate proper APA</p>	<p>Responses are relevant to course content; few errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation.</p>	<p>Responses do not reflect knowledge of course content, lack clarity and depth, and/or include multiple errors in grammar,</p>

	style. (3 Points)	(2 Points)	spelling, and punctuation. (1 Point)
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Week Three Assignment, Part 1 – Writing an Action Research Question(s) or Problem Statement

You have had many opportunities (e.g., review and conference regarding your intern plan; the interviews with the school leaders; the Dana text identification of nine common topics for school action research, Step 1 in the Harris et al. text) to review and analyze topics or questions for action research. The Dana text provides a sampling of research questions corresponding to the nine common topics for action research; see Sample Inquiry Questions, pp. 65 – 66. We have also provided another sample of action research questions from an action research project; see the Resource Section for the Equity Audit of Mathematics by Jo Ann Colson and Valerie Petrzelka, two elementary principals in Tomball ISD, who are doctoral students in the Lamar Educational Leadership program. Please read their research questions that guided their equity audit.

Using the various examples of action research questions or statements, write a research question and/or clear statement to address the possible areas for action research emerging from the interview(s), readings and brainstorming. This action research question(s) or statement describing the action research project should clearly identify the agreed upon topic that you will research throughout this program, or until, the project is completed. The question or statement should briefly describe the rationale or previous research you have conducted leading to this question or problem statement.

Workspace

Complete Part 1 of this assignment below. The box will expand as you type.

How can the utilization of a one to one laptop environment help improve Language Arts in third and fourth grade classrooms?

My campus has decided on looking into Netbooks. After research into different mini/netbook laptops setups, I decided on the Dell 2110 Netbooks and docking carts which hold 24 laptops. Now that we know which mini/netbook laptop to purchase, costs, etc., I wanted to find the best way to implement the one-to-one so they would be most beneficial for our students. As a technology committee we decided on implementing the initiative with our third and fourth grade students at our Kindergarten through fourth grade campus. As we were making decisions I realized that this was a perfect opportunity to do action research on the implementation of this initiative. Since third and fourth grade are tested in Language Arts via Reading and Writing, I thought that would be an excellent place to being research.

Week Three Assignment, Part 2 – Developing an Action Research Plan

Draft an action research plan that includes:

- Goals and objectives/outcomes of the research investigation
- Activities designed to achieve the objectives
- Resources and research tools needed for data gathering
- Draft timeline for completion or implementation of activities
- Persons responsible for implementation of the action research plan
- Process for monitoring the achievement of goals and objectives
- Assessment instrument(s) to evaluate the effectiveness of the action research study

Please check the Resource section of the course for a template, SIP or PIP (School or Professional Improvement Project) Plan of Action that you may wish to use in developing and submitting your Action Research Plan of Action Brief or Outline. You may also use the template found in the Harris et al. text, Tool 7.1 Action Planning Template, p. 85, this is also available as a free download, see p. vii.

Workspace

Complete Part 2 of this assignment below. The box will expand as you type.

Action Planning Template

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Goal: How can the utilization of a one to one laptop environment help improve Language Arts in third and fourth grade classrooms?

Action Steps(s):	Person(s) Responsible:	Timeline: Start/End	Needed Resources	Evaluation
1. Discuss topic with Principal, and site supervisor	Myself, Dr. Lynda Carter, and Robert Harris	November 22, 2010/December 3, 2010	Intern Plan	Creation of action research topic.
2. Meet with 3 rd and 4 th grade teachers implementing 1-1 to train on proper execution of Netbook carts for effective utilization.	Myself and Participating teachers (2 third grade teachers, and 2 fourth grade teachers)	January 2011	Training materials created by me, articles and books for books study	Teacher feedback and active monitoring
3. Meet with 3 rd and 4 th grade 1-1 teachers and introduce lessons to enhance language arts with integrated technology.	Myself and Participating teachers (2 third grade teachers, and 2 fourth grade teachers)	February 2011	Lessons created by me using Web 2.0 tools	Teacher feedback and active monitoring
4. Conduct monthly meetings with 1-1 teachers to discuss proper utilization and concerns. Give suggestions, lessons, and	Myself and Participating teachers (2 third grade teachers, and 2 fourth grade teachers)	January 2011-December 2011	Time, projector, laptop, Dell 2110 Netbooks	Teacher feedback and active monitoring

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professional development as needed.				
5. Collect data from all 4 th grade writing and reading fall 2010 and 2011 benchmarks, TAKs writing and reading scores 2011. Collect data from all 3 rd grade reading benchmarks 2010 and 2011, TAKs reading scores 2011.	Myself, Participating teachers (2 third grade teachers, and 2 fourth grade teachers), Dr. Carter	December 2011	Disaggregated TAKS scores, benchmarks, progress monitors	All data accounted for
6. Evaluate data from all 4 th grade writing and reading fall 2010 and 2011 benchmarks, TAKs writing and reading scores 2011. Evaluate data from all 3 rd grade reading benchmarks 2010 and 2011, TAKs reading scores 2011.	Myself, Participating teachers (2 third grade teachers, and 2 fourth grade teachers), Dr. Carter	December 2011	Disaggregated TAKS scores, benchmarks, progress monitors	Quantitative and qualitative results
7. Compare the results from 1-1 classrooms to 3 rd and 4 th grade classrooms not piloting program.	Myself, Participating teachers (2 third grade teachers, and 2 fourth grade teachers), Dr. Carter	December 2011	Disaggregated TAKS scores, benchmarks, progress monitors	Disaggregated TAKS scores, benchmarks, progress monitors comparison

Week Three Assignment, Part 3 – Steps to Follow in Your Action Research Plan

As discussed previously, there are many how to conduct action research steps or strategies to follow in developing your Action Research Plan. Some of the readings have already described the action research process, and some have even provided illustrations demonstrating the action research cycle.

One of the better and concise texts describing steps in action research* is your supplemental text, *Examining what we do to improve our schools: 8 steps from analysis to action* by Sandra Harris, Stacey Edmonson, and Julie Combs, (Eye on Education, 2010). We added this to the course because we think it provides an excellent how to implement action research blueprint that you may use for any school or professional improvement project. Here are the steps they outline:

1. Examining the work: Setting the Foundation – in other words, identifying needs or topics for action research and this may emerge from the Site Based Decision Making Committee, or from needs like those identified in your intern plan.
2. Analyzing data – you have had many opportunities to do this, and you examined at least 9 data gathering strategies from your text in Part 2 of this week's assignments
3. Developing deeper understanding – these are additional data collection techniques, as well as, examining qualitative data through active listening, focus groups, etc.
4. Engaging in Self-Reflection – this summarizes much of what you have been doing in this course, and throughout the program, beginning with your many self-assessments of leadership in EDLD 5311
5. Exploring Programmatic Patterns – This includes asking the appropriate questions, identifying data patterns and gaps, and learning to address equity issues
6. Determining direction – Working collaboratively to address action research questions, monitoring progress, and assessing achievement
7. Taking action for school improvement – Using appropriate steps or templates like the SIP or PIP Plan of action to guide the action research
8. Sustaining improvement – Learning to use the tools of action research as an on-going process for professional development and school improvement.

*Please see the Action Research Project Process Overview Example: Student Use of Cell Phones in the Resource Section for a more detailed outline.

Using this outline, or the PIP/SIP template, review the steps, make any needed revisions and submit your draft Action Research Plan. Be sure to also upload your Plan on your Action Research Blog for others to view and share insights.

Workspace

Complete Part 3 of this assignment below. The box will expand as you type.

1. Examining the work: Setting the Foundation –

With the Technology Team at University Park Elementary School, we realized that we would benefit from a one-to-one laptop initiative. The committee was excited but I want to ensure that the implementation of this program is outlined and has protocols for a successful release. Since we plan to focus on third and fourth grades, Language Arts has an extremely important focus in state testing. **How can the utilization of a one to one laptop environment help improve Language Arts in third and fourth grade classrooms?**

2. Analyzing data –

From previous research, the principal and I realized that programs that had an organized release of laptops were more successful in teacher/student usage. How can third and fourth grade teachers use laptops in a way to be more beneficial? We also started to delve into whether or not the laptops should go home with students. While conducting preliminary research, I wanted to ensure the data was not older than 5 years old since technology changes so rapidly.

During my action research I will utilize TAKS scores, benchmarks, progress monitors form 3rd and 4th grade classes. I will compare the scores of 1-1 classrooms to the classrooms that are not part of the 1-1 pilot program.

3. Developing deeper understanding –

Quantitative: Since I am doing my research with third and fourth grades, they have many benchmarks and preliminary tests that are similar to TAKS. We also utilize MAPs (Measures of Academic Progress) testing which has a reading section. Since I am able to compare results between classes utilizing 1-1 and classes not utilizing 1-1 at the same school, the data has more validity.

Qualitative: I will discuss with teachers their utilization and their perceptions. I want to also work with the classes and try different Web 2.0 sites for collaboration.

4. Engaging in Self-Reflection –

In my action research, self reflection is extremely important so I can easily remark and see changes in behaviors. Reflection allows for proper documentation. I plan to utilize my course blog to acknowledge reflection throughout the action research process.

5. Exploring Programmatic Patterns –

I plan on discussing progress of the implementation of the 1-1 with teachers, school principal, and site supervisor. I am planning on working with these groups continuously throughout each six weeks period. I will need to be understanding of the needs and time constraints of my schools' teachers and students.

6. Determining direction –

Since I plan to utilize score from testing, I will not need to add additional testing to the students or teachers. I will utilize the testing (state, benchmark, and MAPs testing) scores to help shape my research. I will also spend time discussing

implementation of the 1-1 with teachers to stay actively involved in their implementation and determine teacher/students needs.

7. Taking action for school improvement –

I created a plan using the template from *Examining What We Do to Improve Our Schools* to organize the action plan. I will utilize the targeted areas as a springboard to create topics of discussion and research with my school's teachers.

8. Sustaining improvement –

I plan to work with teachers utilizing the 1-1 regularly both during conference meetings and team teaching with the teachers. I want to keep dialogue open between teachers and administration open while helping to create a successful environment for the implementation of the 1-1 environment. I plan to have professional development sessions with teachers throughout the school on Web 2.0 and will spend specific time working with 1-1 teachers to utilize these tools. It is important to find specific technologies that would make the 1-1 a successful, collaborative venture.

Week Three Assignment, Part 4 – Sharing Your Action Research Plan, Progress, Findings, and Recommendations

Read chapter 5 from the Dana text, *The Travelogue: Sharing your work with others*, pp. 135 – 169, and write a description of how you will share the progress and process of your action research project, as well as discussing ways to disseminate your action research project findings and recommendations. Be sure to include information on the four critical tasks you must include in effectively sharing your action research project, see the Dana text, pp. 163 – 169.

Workspace

Complete Part 4 of this assignment below. The box will expand as you type.

Background:

A few years ago my principal and I discussed the utilization of a one-to-one environment for our school. I have been researching the technologies available. Previously I was never impressed with a laptop that could be financially feasible and sustain the technologies utilized. Recently I found the Dell 2110 and networkable cart. After finding the Dell Netbook I was eager to find ways to implement this technology. Working with my principal, we designed a 5 year vision along with getting parent approval for purchasing using gifted money to our school. We decided that utilizing a one to one environment was more practical cognitively and financially with our third and fourth graders at our school that teaches Kindergarten through fourth grade students.

Sharing the Design of the Inquiry

Since we decided on third and fourth grades to begin the one to one laptop initiative we thought it was important to begin with piloting the laptops in two of the six fourth grade classrooms and two of the six third grade classrooms. Since third and fourth are pivotal years in language arts testing, I wanted to ensure the proper implementation of these tools. I have decided to do an action research into how can the utilization of a one to one laptop environment help improve Language Arts in third and fourth grade classrooms.

Since I am doing my research with third and fourth grades, they have many benchmarks and preliminary tests that are similar to TAKS. We also utilize MAPs (Measures of Academic Progress) testing which has a reading section. To collect quantitative data I am going to compare results between classes utilizing 1-1 and classes not utilizing 1-1 at the same school. For qualitative data, I will discuss with teachers their utilization and their perceptions. I want to also work with the classes and try different Web 2.0 sites for collaboration.

Stating Learning and Supporting the Statements with Data:

During my action research project I will ensure that I disseminate the information learned. I plan to blog about my findings within my blogger site to ensure that whoever wishes to learn the findings can easily attain the information. In *Leading with Passion and Knowledge*, Dana states that it is important when sharing information from action research to include four components, "1-providing background information, 2-sharing the design of the inquiry, 3-stating the learning and supporting the statements with data, and 4-providing concluding thoughts.(p.163)"

Concluding Thoughts:

I am finding that having a planned action research has given me an opportunity to organize my findings and to steer me in the correct direction. I will be able to more easily work with my teachers now that I have a stated goal of research.

Reference

Fichman, Nancy Dana (2009). *Leading with passion and knowledge: The principal as action Researcher*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Blog reflections

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As noted above, please post your Action Research Plan on your blog, and make every effort to read and review action research plans from at least two other blogs this week or by early next week.

<http://knightl.blogspot.com/2010/12/action-research-week-3.html>